

OFFICER DECISION RECORD

General guidance note: Please complete using Plain English, avoiding acronyms and use of jargon; this will be a published document so please be mindful of a public audience in completing this decision record.

Decision Title:

Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps, call one recommendations to fund.

Decision reference number: 05.07.2022

Decision date: 07/07/2022

Background / reason for decision: Insert a brief description of the background to the decision and the reason for it. If this is an urgent decision, explain the reason for urgency.

Delegated authority has been granted to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to take decisions on the award of grants through the Skills Bootcamp initiative. Decisions were reached in consultation with Chief Executives of the Combined Authority's constituent councils.

1. The first of three funding calls for Skills Bootcamps attracted eight unique bids. All bids were assessed using a matrix system and a panel of assessors.
2. Six unique bids from four unique providers were recommended for funding, each bid requiring some clarifications. Two bids were unsuccessful.
3. Total funding amount for the six recommended bids totalled £977,520, leaving a further c.£1.752m of the total allocation to be used against two further calls. Funding for this call will reach 275 residents, benefitting the logistics and construction sectors.

Options considered: (as relevant/applicable)

Not applicable in relation to this specific decision, i.e., this was the option considered.

Decision

Funding Back 2 Work, Bridges Engineering, City of Bristol College and HBXL completes a funding portfolio valued at £977,520.00 Reasons for funding are outlined as follows:

- a. Back to Work – HGV driver training

Lead provider Back to work delivering HGV driver training to 100 learners over 16 weeks. Application incorporates all three major pathways, upskilling cat C- E, Novice to Cat C and Novice to Cat E all of which are respectably priced averaging £2,343.86 per learner. Six employers are in the LEP Geographical region with three positioned just over the board in Wiltshire. Wrap around support of an additional 26 hours is provided. Total funding is £222,000

b. Bridges Engineering

Lead provider Bridges engineering delivering specialist training to 25 learners following a government contract to deliver a specialist training in water treatment following the unfortunate explosion in Bristol December 2020. Based in Midsomer Norton training will upskill new and existing engineers to undertake specialist project work. Working to 'CompEx' scheme standards learners will be developed to national standard and will be well supported to achieve this accreditation. Average cost per learner £2,980. Total funding is £71,520.00.

c. City of Bristol College – HGV driver training

Lead provider City of Bristol College to deliver HGV Driver training to 150 learners within 16 weeks. Application initially scored low, but with clarifications this bid was accepted and reassurances provided that all learners would complete by March 31st 2023. Working closely with Skills for Logistics and has proven delivery capacity and experience of completing learners. Good levels of support provided through the wider college function and seeks to serve areas of Avonmouth and Portbury areas vital to the regions continued recovery. Average cost per learner £2,800. Total funding amount £386,400.00.

d. City of Bristol College – Logistics management

Lead provider City of Bristol College working with Skills for logistics to deliver learning to 50 learners within Avonmouth and Portbury docks, highlighted as key areas of Covid recovery. Upon clarifications the application identifies key areas of warehousing, team leading and logistics supply chain within the proposed curriculum framework. Skills for logistics and City of Bristol College have experience of working together with the former having deliver proposed curriculum successfully across organisations in the past. Average costs per learner £3500. Total funding amount £140,000.00

e. HBXL – CAD in Construction

Lead provider HBXL working with local providers cross the region, a modular approach to curriculum design will see learners gain industry relevant skills influenced by key stakeholders such as Network rail, CITB, Mott Mac the DWP and others. CAD course meets current skills shortages but also addresses the future of construction and its modern methods. Average cost per learner £4000. Total funding amount £73,600.00

f. HBXL – Construction management

Lead provider HBXL working with local providers cross the region, a modular approach to curriculum design will see learners gain industry

relevant skills influenced by key stakeholders such as Network rail, CITB, Mott Mac the DWP and others. Comprehensive curriculum combines both the role of the site manager in a health and safety environment, management through understanding the skills of the employee and acknowledging the future developments of modern methods of construction and the skills required for this. The curriculum offer is rounded and provides opportunity across the construction sector offering seamless progression with suitable wrap around support. Average cost per learner £3,000. Total funding is £84,000.00

Recommend not to fund

Funding both Weston College and System group would deliver an overspend of £383,131 (*Annex 1*), However this would not be without significant risk as outlined below

- a. The System Group Ltd
Cited as having liquidity concerns through the due diligence process, recommendation was made not to fund
Concerns regarding first five days of learning drawing down 45% of funding £600,000.00 with minimal work required, concern here is that enrolments alone could serve to repay a portion System Group debt valued at c.£1.3m, with no record positive impact
Provided a residential address as delivery address, other delivery address provided was outside the geographical LEP area, not fulfilling application gateway criteria
Inconsistencies around delivery hours throughout application, not identifying with portrayed delivery experience

- b. Weston College
Funding would lead to an overall reduction against remaining projects as the £3.3m funding envelope must administer funding to 1120 unique individuals as outlined in the Grant Funding Agreement, reducing funding to projects like green skills is not a preferred option, further risks include: Bid value is twice as much as other received bids, this brings into question value for money. Requirement to relaunch the entire process so all bid applicants have the opportunity against the high funding bracket. This would delay enrolment and place a greater proportion of the project at risk, when 50% of all enrolments must be reported to DfE by the end of September. Failure to do this will result in returning money to DfE, after October 15th monitoring visit.

Consultation:

The Chief Executives of the West of England unitary authorities were consulted on these proposals.

Officer making decision: *Richard Ennis*

Position: *Interim Director of Investment & Corporate Services*

Report / appendices / background documents: *Skills Bootcamp DfE proposal and GFA*